ANNUAL REPORT 1981 - 82

Alberta Health and Social Services

Disciplines Committee

Alberta

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. History of Committee

The history of attempts to establish a formal coordinating mechanism between the various departments of the provincial government involved in manpower planning for health and social service personnel goes back to August 1973. At that time, an interdepartmental committee called the Alberta Health Manpower Committee was established. The Committee consisted of senior officials from the Departments of Health & Social Development, Labour & Manpower, and Advanced Education and the Alberta Hospital Services Commission. The Deputy Minister of the Department of Health & Social Development acted as Chairman of the Alberta Health Manpower Committee.

Because of the re-organization of various departments of the provincial government in 1975-76, a new interdepartmental committee called the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee was established in August 1976. Its first meeting was held on September 8, 1976.

The present report, which is the Disciplines Committee's fifth Annual Report, describes the activities of the Disciplines Committee from April 1, 1981 to March 31, 1982.

B. Membership of Committee

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee is made up of two representatives each from the Departments of Advanced Education & Manpower, Hospitals & Medical Care, and Social Services & Community Health. The Committee has a non-government Chairman, Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A.

Mr. Raymond Pong, who is a staff member of the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health serves as

a full-time Secretary. The Committee also has a Secretariat, which is made up of staff members of the Health & Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education & Manpower, the Research & Strategic Planning Branch of the Department of Hospitals & Medical Care, and the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services & Community Health.

A list of the current members of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee and of the Committee's Secretariat appears in Appendix A on page 11.

C. Role of Committee

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee has the following two main roles:

1. to advise the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the Departments of Advanced Education & Manpower, Hospitals & Medical Care, and Social Services & Community Health on health and social service manpower issues; and

2. to coordinate the three Departments' manpower planning activities for health and social service personnel.

The Committee's formal terms of reference appear in Appendix B on page 12.

D. Major Activities of Committee

The Committee met twelve times during the year. The Committee's major activities involved the collection of data on the major health and social service manpower groups in the province and the consideration of reports, produced by the Committee's Secretariat, on various health and social service manpower issues, and the making of recommendations to be directed to the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the three Departments.

II. DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

A. Manpower Groups for which Data are Currently Collected

The Committee devoted much of its resources to the collection of base-line data (e.g., numbers and geographic distribution of personnel, outputs of training programs, and manpower supply and demand situations) on major manpower groups in the health and social service sector in the province. The collection of such base-line data was deemed essential to monitoring current manpower situations and improving planning for health and social service personnel in Alberta.

Detailed manpower data were collected by the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services & Community Health on behalf of the Committee on the following 37 health and social service manpower groups during 1981-82 through a survey of professional associations and registration boards.

1. Audiologists/Speech Pathologists
2. Child Care Workers
3. Chiropractors
4. Combined Laboratory & X-Ray Technicians
5. Dental Assistants
6. Dental Hygienists
7. Denturists
8. Dental Technicians
9. Dentists
10. Dietary Technicians
11. Dietitians/Nutritionists
12. Electrocardiographic Technicians
13. Electroencephalographic Technologists
14. Emergency Medical Technicians - Paramedic
15. Health Record Administrators (Medical Record Librarians)
16. Health Record Technicians (Medical Record Technicians)
17. Hearing Aid Audiologists
18. Medical Laboratory Technologists

19. Occupational Therapists
20. Ophthalmic Assistants
21. Ophthalmic Dispensers
22. Optometrists
23. Orthoptists
24. Pharmacists
25. Physicians
26. Physiotherapists
27. Podiatrists
28. Prosthetists/Orthotists
29. Psychiatric Nurses
30. Psychologists
31. Public Health Inspectors
32. Radiological Technicians
33. Registered Nurses
34. Registered Nursing Assistants
35. Rehabilitation Practitioners
36. Respiratory Technologists
37. Social Workers

Data on electrocardiographic technicians, emergency medical technicians - paramedic, hearing aid audiologists, orthoptists, and rehabilitation practitioners were collected by the Committee for the first time in 1981-82.

Because of time constraints and limitation of resources, it was not possible to collect data on all health and social service manpower groups currently practising in Alberta. However, the Committee hopes to gradually increase its data collection efforts in the future to include all major health and social service manpower groups in the province.

B. Report on Manpower Groups

In November 1981, a report entitled Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1980 was published by the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services & Community Health on behalf of

the Committee. This report provided basic information and statistical data on 35 health and social service manpower groups.

The report consisted of a general introduction and a chapter on each of the 35 manpower groups. Each chapter was divided into the following four sections:

1. an "overview" section (including a functional definition of and statistical highlights on the manpower group);
2. a section on professional association and legislation information;
3. a section on personnel data (e.g., number of personnel registered or practising in the province and geographic distribution of personnel); and
4. a section on educational programs and outputs of training programs (including both basic education programs and continuing education programs).

The Committee is currently producing Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1981, which will reflect the health and social service manpower situation as of December 31, 1981.

C. Alberta Physician Data Bank

The Department of Hospitals & Medical Care maintains a data bank on physicians currently practising in Alberta. The primary source of information for this data bank is the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta.

In general, the Alberta Physician Data Bank provides information on the supply and geographic distribution of physicians in Alberta. The Committee will be publishing information (as of December 31, 1981) from this data bank in the report entitled Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1981.

D. Inventory of Training Programs

In March 1981, the Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education & Manpower published a report entitled Alberta Health and Social Service Training Program Inventory, 1979-80. In March 1982, the Department published the 1980-81 Inventory. These two reports contained the following types of information on health and social service manpower training programs in Alberta:

1. where provincial training programs are located and their lengths;
2. the number of applicants to these programs;
3. the first-year enrollment quotas of these programs;
4. the actual enrollments in these programs; and
5. the number of graduates produced by these programs.

The production of an annual inventory of training programs will be an on-going activity, which the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower will undertake on behalf of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee.

E. Manpower Surveys

In 1979, the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services & Community Health began surveying all major employers of health and social service personnel in Alberta on behalf of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. Two surveys were conducted each year (as of March 31 and September 30). The main objectives of these surveys were three-fold:

1. to regularly monitor the current supply and demand situations for the major health and social service manpower groups in the province;
2. to provide employers and the provincial government with an "early warning" system for discovering manpower shortages,

high turnovers of personnel and problems of geographic maldistribution; and

3. to provide information to enable Alberta to gear its health and social service manpower training programs to produce the numbers and types of personnel which employers require.

The surveys were designed to collect province-wide information on the current number of practising health and social service personnel in Alberta and their current vacancy and turnover situations. The first survey was carried out on March 31, 1979.

In September 1981, the Committee published the results of its fifth manpower survey, which was conducted on March 31, 1981. A total of 1,887 employing agencies were surveyed. With a response rate of 99 percent, the survey obtained data on 63 health and social service manpower groups.

As of March 31, 1981, there were 37,130 established positions* for health and social service personnel in the employing agencies surveyed. These employing agencies reported 1,816 vacant positions,* representing a vacancy rate of 4.9 percent. In addition, they reported an overall staff turnover rate of 12.3 percent for the six-month period from October 1, 1980 to March 31, 1981.

In April 1982, the Committee will publish the results of its sixth manpower survey, which was conducted on September 30, 1981. A total of 1,720 employing agencies of health and social service personnel were contacted. The survey was designed to obtain data on 63 health and social service manpower groups.

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* Both established positions and vacant positions are stated in terms of full-time equivalents.

III. REPORTS PRODUCED

In order to advise the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the three Departments on important health and social service manpower issues, the Committee produced the following six reports in 1980-81:

1. "Policy Paper on Continuing Education Programs for Health and Social Service Personnel"
2. "Policy Paper on the Training and Regulation of Health and Social Service Aides"
3. "Policy Paper on Ambulance Attendants"
4. "Status Report on Rehabilitation Therapy Personnel"
5. "Status Report on Social Workers"
6. "Status Report on the Training of Personnel Providing Health and Social Services for the Elderly"

IV. SPECIAL REQUESTS

In addition to carrying out the manpower data collection and manpower research and planning activities outlined in the previous sections, the Committee handled special work requests from the Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and other senior officials of the three departments. These requests were generally related to various manpower issues and were deemed relevant to the work of the Committee. The Committee also provided health and social service manpower data and information for other government departments, the Health Occupations Board, and non-government agencies on many occasions.

V. INTER-PROVINCIAL HEALTH MANPOWER COMMITTEES

Two members of the Disciplines Committee's Secretariat (Mr. Bill Novasky and Mr. Raymond Pong) maintain close liaison with the health manpower planning activities of other provinces through their membership on the following two inter-provincial committees, the Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Manpower and the Western Canada Post-Secondary Health Manpower Requirements Sub-Committee.

The major topics discussed in the meetings of these two Committees in 1981-82 were:

1. Nursing Manpower
2. Medical Manpower
3. Dental Manpower
4. Health Manpower Training for the Native Population
5. Personnel in Biomedical Specialties
6. Mechanism to Direct Manpower Supply in Medical Specialties
7. Teachers of the Handicapped
8. Speech Pathology and Audiology Personnel
9. Clinical Placement
10. Provision of Placements for Optometry Students
11. Personnel in Prosthetics and Orthotics
12. Psychiatric Nursing Personnel
13. Distance Education in Extended Care Nursing
14. Nuclear Medicine Personnel
15. Rehabilitation Personnel

APPENDIX A

MEMBERSHIP OF

ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

(as of March 31, 1982)

Members

Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A., Chairman, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Mr. Gordon Armstrong, Executive Secretary, Alberta Manpower Committee, Alberta Advanced Education & Manpower

Dr. D. E. Berghofer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Program Services Division, Alberta Advanced Education & Manpower

Dr. A. V. Follett, Senior Medical Consultant, Alberta Hospitals & Medical Care

Mr. D. J. Junk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Development Division, Alberta Hospital & Medical Care

Dr. D. A. Shedden, Acting Executive Director, Community Health Services, Alberta Social Services & Community Health

Dr. J. D. Taylor, Director, Special Health Services Branch, Alberta Social Services & Community Health

Secretariat

Mr. Raymond W. Pong, Secretary, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee; Director of Manpower Planning, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Social Services & Community Health

Mr. Edward Bruce, Senior Program Consultant, Health and Social Service Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education & Manpower

Ms. Sandy Gosnell, Research Assistant, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Social Services & Community Health

Mrs. Vivien Lai, Director, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals & Medical Care

Mr. Thomas Lynch, Research Officer, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals & Medical Care

Mr. William E. Novasky, Director, Health and Social Service Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education & Manpower

Mr. Richard Powell, Research Officer, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Social Services & Community Health

APPENDIX B

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF
ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

1. In conjunction with appropriate agencies, develop on an ongoing basis inventories on:

   i. Health and Social Services Disciplines Training Programs.
   ii. Health and Social Services Disciplines Supply and Distribution.

2. Review pertinent studies, data and executive decisions from other jurisdictions on the training and supply of health and social services manpower.

3. Review short and long range plans from appropriate agencies for:

   i. Health and Social Services Disciplines Training Programs
   ii. Health and Social Services Disciplines Supply and Distribution.

4. Review alternative requirements to meet the needs for the development of health and social services in the future.

5. Define areas of particular concern in the training and/or supply and/or distribution of health and social services personnel and recommend ways of resolving these concerns.

6. Advise from time to time on request the need for indepth studies in particular areas of manpower training and supply.

7. Undertake such other related activities as may be required.

8. Submit an annual report on the activities of the Committee.